

Greater Community Missionary Baptist Church

Youth Ministry Team Guidelines



Ministry in Action

Victory in Christ Every Day!

Greater Community Missionary Baptist Church
 “The Way Ahead”
 Youth Ministry Team

Effective: September 2011

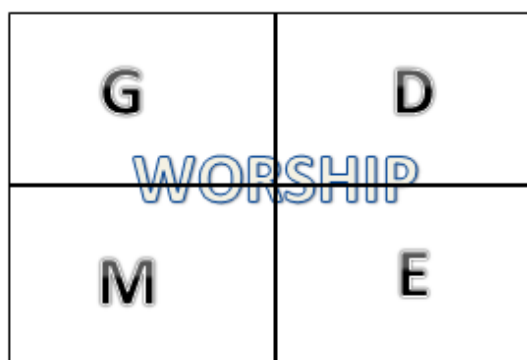
Youth Ministry Team Leader	Minister Natasha Dorsey
Youth Ministry Team Workers (Adults):	Sis. Cynthia Andry Sis. Debbie Kendrick Sis. Cydnee Cavole Min. Diann Windsor Bro. Tony Turner Bro. Frank Mosley Sis. Kenesha Pace Sis. Leticia Parks
Youth Ministry Team (Youth):	Nya Dorsey Leneisa Parks
Children’s Ministry (Nursery)	Sis. Mary Carter Sis. Sylvia Johnson
Youth Ministry Mission:	
Youth Ministry Assignments:	Youth Activities and Special Events
Pastoral Focus:	“The Way Ahead” Vision (See chart/mandates)

General Guidelines

- The Pastoral Vision “The Way Ahead” directs the focus of the ministry team activities and events. All activities and curriculum will correspond at the appropriate level for each age group.
- The Youth Ministry Team Workers will be assigned an age group to facilitate activities as approved by the Pastor and Youth Ministry Team Leader.
- All Youth Ministry Team Workers will participate in a “train-mentor-encourage-support the teacher” session prior to full implementation of any curriculum.
- It is the intent to prepare and equip all workers for effective ministry, biblical foundational teaching, and opportunities to spiritually grow as a leader, and develop relationships with co-laborers.

The Way Ahead Vision (Present - December 2011)

The Church Worship Strategy IAW Acts



Evangelism – Acts 2:37-41

Discipleship – Acts 2:42

Giving – Acts 2:44-45

Missions – Acts 6; Mat 25:35-40

Youth Ministry Team Organization

To ensure an effective youth ministry at Greater Community the working structure consists of a Youth Ministry Leader (appointed by the Pastor), Youth Ministry Workers/Teachers, and Youth. This entire group will be referred to as the Youth Ministry Team. We also acknowledge the interest and active role of parents of youth, and other workers serving during special events as being vital to the effectiveness of the youth ministry.

Youth Ministry Team Leader Role

The Youth Ministry Team Leader will serve as the lead of the ministry team with all rights and privileges of directing the team in planning, preparation, implementation, evaluation of the ministry outcomes, and assignment of Youth Ministry Team Workers and age group assignments.

Youth Ministry Concerns

If Youth Ministry Team members have disagreements or concerns please address all with the Youth Ministry Team Leader. If resolution or agreement is not reached, the next step will be to present the concern to the Pastor with the issues and parties in attendance as well.

Diligent and consistent prayerful deliberations and petitions of the Lord will ensure harmonious ministry strategies that are Spirit-led.

Responsibilities of the Youth Ministry Team

The Youth Ministry Team will:

1. Pray for the youth and youth ministry.
2. Establish policies and procedures for youth ministry team functions.
3. Establish a Youth Ministry Handbook (i.e. brochure)
4. Identify and recruit teachers and additional support resources for the youth ministry.
5. Plan and help facilitate Youth Ministry works/teaching development programs.
6. Attend corporate Bible Study and Prayer as a model of excellent leadership.
7. Evaluate on-going youth programs and scheduled events in relation to the vision.
8. Recommend and implement new and varied youth programming based on needs of the youth.
9. Prepare budgets for special events for presentation to the General Assembly.
10. Review and seek approval for fund-raising activities (long term planning).
11. Sponsor the Youth Ministry Kick-Off program in September
12. Sponsor the Youth Ministry Team Worker/Teacher Curriculum Trainings.
13. Respond to and resolve concerns/issues that cannot be resolved by or with advisors or church staff and do so in a confidential/ethical manner expeditiously
14. Prepare any documents requested by the Pastor/Admin.Staff (i.e. monthly reports, annual reports, Ministry action plan forms).
15. Approve and seek approval for Youth Ministry Team by Pastor. The Way Ahead seeks approval from the Christian Education Advisor for youth ministry.
16. Ensure the balance is maintained between spiritual activities and fellowship (i.e. games, field trips).
17. Address issues and resolve problems of group building and cohesiveness within the youth group.
18. Serve as mentors for youth, helping them to identify areas where their gifts may be used to build up the church, and spiritual grow as an Ambassador for Christ. (Discipline and Personal Victory Development).
19. Publicize and promote Youth Ministry activities with youth and their parents.
20. Contact and welcome visitors and new members to Youth Ministry programs.
21. Encourage parent to youth communication.

Youth - on the Youth Ministry Team

Each youth is an important part of our Youth Ministry program, bringing particular gifts, which enhance the group and the church's ministry to young people. One opportunity for young people to serve is as a member of the Youth Ministry Team. It is the intent to ensure appropriate representation of age, gender, etc. Each youth on the Youth Ministry Team will have an opportunity to share and engage in ministry planning, be assigned specific responsibilities, or committee work that will maximize his/her gifts and leadership skills to enhance the Youth Ministry program.

THE BIG PICTURE OF YOUTH MINISTRY

The People of Youth Ministry

A. The Parents

1. The Home is the primary institution as set forth by God.
2. The Parents have the greatest responsibility and accountability of teaching and bringing up their children in the way of the Lord-not a church Youth Ministry.

B. The Pastor

1. The Pastor is God's man called to be the Shepherd of the entire church, including the Youth Ministry.
2. The Pastor is an active advisor to the Youth Ministry Team Leader and has final approval or veto of any function.
3. The Pastor is concerned with the spiritual development of the Youth Ministry Team as a ministry of the church.

C. The Youth Ministry Team Leader

1. A Leader called of God to the specific area of Youth Ministry.
2. The Youth Ministry Team Leader is concerned with developing the youth around the five areas of healthy youth ministry as connected with Pastoral vision.
3. The Youth Ministry Team Leader is concerned with the training of the Youth Ministry Team Workers/Teachers so that they can effectively minister to the youth.

D. The Youth Ministry Team Members

1. The Youth Ministry Team members (workers) are to assist the Youth Ministry Team Leader in the mentoring, teaching, discipleship, and encouragement of the young people.
2. The Youth Ministry member/workers are given a small group of teens so they can disciple them effectively.

A Biblical Youth Foundation

Five Areas of Healthy Youth Ministry as adapted from "*Purpose Driven Youth Ministry*", by Doug Fields.

I. **Worship.** This is celebrating God's presence and honoring Him with our lifestyle. It is the reason that God created us. It is a focused time of turning our attention to God and God alone and magnifying Him. We are to live in this way by offering up ourselves as living sacrifices to God. (Romans 12: 1)

II. **Discipleship.** This is the process of building up, training, and strengthening believers in their goal of being like Christ. We must train teens to move on to maturity (Hebrews 6:

1), and be a stable, growing, and obedient disciple of Christ. They are the church of tomorrow.

III. **Fellowship.** This is the concept of coming together as believers to rejoice, encourage each other, help bear each other's burdens, and to practice the church ordinances. We are to be a family (Ephesians 2: 19).

IV. **Evangelism.** This is sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with those who do not have a relationship with Him yet. God uses His people to fulfill the Great Commission and to be His witnesses (Acts: 1: 8).

V. **Ministry.** This can be defined as meeting the needs of others with the love of Christ. We should help develop the Spiritual gifts of the young people and let them know that Ministry is not just something that adults do. There are no age limitations.

What is the purpose of the Youth Ministry?

The purpose of Youth Ministry is to develop mature Christian adults through the process of Discipleship.

Examples of Youth Ministry in Action

What does it look like...what do we want it to be like? How

I. Worship. We want to teach the youth to worship by actively doing so on Youth night, Sunday services, and by living a life, that pleases God.

II. Discipleship. We desire to make disciples of these young people in accordance with the Great Commission of our Lord. This will be accomplished through formal group discipleship, individual discipleship, and informal discipleship.

III. Fellowship. We believe that it is important that young Christians have the ability to be around each other, especially in light of all the pressures, they face in school; to accomplish this monthly youth activities, retreats, special events, and weekly youth meetings will occur.

IV. Evangelism. It is important in Youth Ministry to train them to be bold in their witness for Christ. There are two types of evangelism 1. Lifestyle Evangelism and 2. Verbal Evangelism. Both of these must be practiced in order to be effective. We teach these teens to live out their Christianity and to be ready to give a reason for the hope that lies within them.

Ministry. Ministry is accomplished when the people of God use their Spiritual Gifts to bless the Body of Christ. We will show these teens how to identify their spiritual gifts and put them into practice at Greater Community Missionary Baptist Church.

Greater Youth Ministry in Motion

Wednesday Youth Night (not confirmed as of 9/7/11)

When: Wednesdays 6: 00-8: 00 pm (September-May)
 Where: Youth Ministry Area/classrooms (Downstairs)
 What to bring: Bible, pen, paper
 Who: Middle School/High School (7-12 graders)

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Elementary School Grades and Nursery

- *4th to 6th Grades*
- *1st to 3rd Grades*
- *Pre-K/Kindergarten (ages 3-5)*
- *Nursery to 2years of age*

An Example of Time Structure for Group Sessions

A. Time Structure

6: 00-6: 30 Game Time
 6: 30-7: 00 Announcements, Snacks, Singing
 7: 00-7: 30 Message
 7: 30-8: 00 DT (discipleship time)

B. Description of Events

- **Game Time:** This is a time where the group will come together for the purpose of building unity. We will play sports, act crazy, get messy, burn energy, and in general just have a good time.
- **Announcement Time:** This is the time when the group will be kept up to date on upcoming events, get something to eat, and through singing, allow the Lord to prepare our hearts for worship.
- **Message Time:** This is the focal point of the evening. During this time, the Word of God is always opened and I challenge the group with the Word of God. It is during this time that God will challenge the young people in many different areas of life.
- **Discipleship Time:** In DT, each teen is part of a small group led by two (2) Youth Leaders. During this time, the teen will learn a Bible verse, share specific needs, take prayer requests, and will have a focused time of prayer. All of this revolves around the Bible lesson/activities. It is a good opportunity to develop relationships and accountability with other teens and a close relationship with the leaders. We strongly encourage an open, honest relationship between each parent and their teen's Youth Ministry Team Leaders.

September 2011 Schedule

Wednesday Youth Activities 6:30PM-8:00PM

- 6:00-6:30 Prayer
- 6:30-6:45 Pastoral Focus-Bible Study
- 6:45-7:50 Youth Activities Downstairs
- 7:50-8:00 Closing –Rejoin (Upstairs)

Sunday Morning Youth Activities 9:00AM – 10:00AM

- 8:00-9:00 Corporate Prayer Upstairs
- 9:00-10:00 Children & Youth Sunday School
- An example of Scheduled General Lesson
 - 9:00-9:10 Greetings/Introduction
 - 9:10-9:30 General Lesson
 - 9:30-9:50 Activity/Small group
 - 9:50-10:00 Prayer/Snack/Closing

Special Youth Ministry Events

✓ **Wednesday, September 21, 2011**

Youth Ministry Kick-Off!

PFAC Building@6:30PM

† **YOUTH PRAYER 6:00PM-6:30PM**

✓ **October 2011**

M & M Night: Movies and Missions (TBD)

Discipleship and Missions (giveaway M&M candies)

✓ **November 2011**

✓ **December 2011**

Recommendations for further improvement and ministry organization

1. Establish Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for activities/classroom care/permission forms, etc.
2. Safety Precautions/Sanitation/Health precautions
3. Ministry Workers- Information forms (i.e. similar to personnel form/questionnaire)
4. Basic Life Support classes (BLS-Red Cross CPR/First Aid)
5. Environment care and upgrade
6. Utilization of media room/media- Information and Technology resources (IT)

Lesson Material Resources

Godliness in the Middle of Change

Change/Transition

Main Point: Change happens all the time, but when it does, we must react in a godly way.

Discussion Starter: Rank the Change

You'll need to print off copies of this worksheet for each student you have in your group. In addition to the papers, you'll need pens or pencils for them to write with, as well. When everyone has a sheet and writing device, say:

Take a look at your sheet of paper. It's entitled Rank the Change, and it lists various changes that most of us will go through in life. Some are big changes and some are quite insignificant. Here's what I want you to do. I want you to actually rank these changes from easiest to hardest. As you look over the sheet of paper, I want you to write ONE next to the change that you think is the smallest, and TEN beside the change you think is the most significant. Then fill in the other changes with numbers TWO through NINE. That way, the smallest change will be ONE and the greatest change will be TEN. Some of them you might not even have faced at this point in your life. You'll see that some of these changes are mostly good, and some of these changes are bad. But your task is to rank how IMPACTING they are on us, not whether they are good or bad. Got it? You've got 3 minutes to complete this sheet. Go.

Rank the Change

___breaking up with girlfriend/boyfriend

___growth of body

___turning 18

___becoming a parent

___going through a divorce

___death of a family member

___entering middle school

___moving to another town

___dying (yourself)

___losing a job

Transition Statement:

You've probably guessed that we're gonna talk about change. We all face various changes in life, some good and some bad. Some are easy to handle and some are difficult to embrace. Some of the changes are brought on by ourselves, some by others, and some by life in general. Though every change demands a different reaction, the one thing we must do in the midst of every change is respond in a godly manner. Let's spend some time talking about that in our small groups, and then we'll reconvene for a final word.

Divide into Small Groups:

Let's go ahead and split up into our discussion groups, and then afterward we'll come back together for a final word.

Discussion Questions:

1. AROUND THE CIRCLE: As we get started, let's all take a second to share our names and how many of the changes from the sheet (Rank the Change) we've already experienced.
2. ASK A FEW: Was it easy or hard for you to rank the life changes on the sheet of paper? Why?
3. ASK A FEW: What are some other major changes in life that weren't on the sheet of paper?
4. ASK A FEW: What changes have occurred in your life lately?
5. ASK A FEW: How have you handled those changes?

6. ASK A FEW: Do you think God has been pleased with the way you've handled the changes? Why or why not?

Read the following passage:

Daniel 1 (NIV)

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia[a] and put in the treasure house of his god.

3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring in some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility— 4 young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.[b] 5 The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.

6 Among these were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. 7 The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

8 But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. 9 Now God had caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel, 10 but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your[c] food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."

11 Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, 12 "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." 14 So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

15 At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. 16 So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

17 To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

18 At the end of the time set by the king to bring them in, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. 19 The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. 20 In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

21 And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.

7. ASK SOMEONE: What were some of the changes that Daniel and his friends underwent, according to this passage? (Leaders – *Daniel changed geographical settings, language, and laws. He even had his named changed. He was in a different religious climate, and was encouraged to change the food he ate.*)

8. ASK SOMEONE: Would you say these were good changes or bad? Why?
9. ASK A FEW: What remained consistent in Daniel's life even though all these changes were happening around him? (Leaders – *God's law and love for Daniel remained consistent. So did Daniel's faithfulness to God as we'll see in the next question. If need be, you can remind them of the truth that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, Hebrews 13:8.*)
10. ASK A FEW: How did Daniel handle the changes? (Leaders – It will probably not be immediately obvious to your students, but the food that the boys were made to eat was not lawful for them. It had been sacrificed to idols, or was unclean to begin with, or both. Thus, Daniel and the others refused to eat it. They refused to disobey God's law for them.)
11. ASK SOMEONE: How did God reward Daniel's faithfulness?
12. ASK A FEW: Do you think God ever gives us permission to handle change poorly or sinfully? Why or why not?
13. ASK A FEW: What evidence do you have in your life that God has remained consistent for you, even though you face change?
14. ASK A FEW: What change is God expecting you to embrace in a godly manner?
15. AROUND THE CIRCLE: How will you handle the changes you'll face this week?

Wrap Up:

During our time together, we talked about the huge impact that change can have on us. Some of those changes are good and lead to our goodness, while some of the changes are bad and challenge our commitment to God.

We also saw from the Bible that we are not alone in facing change. Daniel was a young person just like you who faced incredible changes! Almost everything about his life changed including his name! But he handled it all with a godliness that challenges us even to this day.

Daniel didn't try to fight back, he just tried to honor God. That's what he thought was most important in his life. He recognized that God nor His law had changed, and he was still obligated to be obedient to God. So he was.

The same is true in our lives. God is the same today as He was in Daniel's life. He loves us and has commands for us to obey. We never get God's permission to break any of his laws for our lives. So, we should remember that each and every time we are faced with a change, especially a change that threatens our commitment to God.

As we wrap up, let's spend some time praying for each other. You know what's going on in each others' lives, so I'm gonna ask you to pray for one another. If you could, get into groups of 3 or 4 right now, and let's pray for the person on our right. That way, everyone gets a chance to pray, and everyone gets prayed for.

After we're done, if you want to talk to an adult leader, please hang around and grab one of us. We'd love to help you face the changes in your life.

Close in Prayer

Follow

Being a Witness for Christ

Main Point of Discussion:

Jesus went from hero to zero to the ultimate hero, now it's our turn to be His witnesses and make disciples of all nations.

Introducing the video:

Have you ever wondered how the life and ministry of Jesus might have been impacted if social networks existed in the 1st Century? The video we are about to watch answers this question in a dynamic and powerful way. As we watch it, make a mental note of which tweets impacted you and why.

The Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDZU5wZydBo>

Transitional Statement:

The video 'Follow' is a powerful reminder of why Jesus left us here on earth after we trusted Him for salvation. Jesus went from hero to zero to the ultimate hero, and now it is our turn to be godly witnesses- perhaps even martyrs- for Him so that

we can carry out His charge to make disciples of all nations. In our own strength we are like Peter, promising to always follow Jesus but rejecting Him when we face rejection. But we have the promise of Jesus' constant presence and the power of the Holy Spirit, so we can go out into the world as confident witnesses and let God use us to make disciples of all nations.

Divide into Small Groups: Let's go ahead and split up into our discussion groups, and then afterward we'll come back together for a final word.

Discussion Questions:

1. AROUND THE CIRCLE: Before we dive in, let's share our names and whether or not you have a Twitter account.
2. ASK A FEW: What are some of the tweets from the video that stood out to you? Why?
3. ASK A FEW: What contributed to Jesus' early popularity with the crowds?
4. ASK A FEW: Why did the Pharisees' tweets go from 'interesting' to 'this man must die'? (Leaders - *Jesus claimed to be God, He healed on the Sabbath*)
5. ASK A FEW: What was the turning point in Jesus' popularity?
6. ASK A FEW: Would you have been a follower? Why or why not?
7. ASK A FEW: What caused Peter to "unfollow" even though he promised to never do such a thing?
8. ASK A FEW: What caused Jesus' popularity to immediately skyrocket after He was so unpopular?
9. ASK A FEW: Do you think the same thing happens today? Why or why not?

Read the following passage from the Bible:

Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth.

Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

10. ASK A FEW: These words are Jesus' last tweet so to speak to His disciples, and if you received it today, how would you respond?
11. ASK A FEW: What is the essence of this passage?

- 12.ASK A FEW: Do we have to 'make disciples' to truly follow Jesus? Why or why not?
- 13.ASK A FEW: What is the difference between 'converting' people to Christianity and 'making disciples'?
- 14.ASK A FEW: How does the promise of Jesus' power and presence in this passage give you confidence to go out and make disciples?

Read the following passage from the Bible:

Acts 1:8 (NLT)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

- 15.ASK A FEW: How would you respond if this were a tweet from Jesus today?
- 16.ASK A FEW: The original word for 'witnesses' in this verse is where we get our word 'martyr'. What do you think Jesus is saying here? (Leaders – *In other words, these disciples were willing to be the full extent of a "witness" even giving their lives to share their message.*)
- 17.ASK A FEW: Would your friends follow Jesus based on the way you represent Him? Why or why not?
- 18.ASK A FEW: What are a few specific ways we could apply these 'tweets' from Jesus to our everyday lives?

Wrap Up:

Pass out 3x5 cards and pencils. Challenge the students to think of one or two friends that don't have a personal relationship with Jesus, and what would they tweet to them if they wanted to be used by God to be a good witness. Ask them to write down 2-3 tweets, then encourage them to send them to their friends via Twitter or Facebook this week so that they might have an opportunity to share the gospel.

Close in Prayer:

Close in a prayer that gives students a chance to trust Christ, then ask a few students to pray for opportunities to be good witnesses for Christ and be used by Him to make disciples.

Written by Lane Palmer

Written by David R Smith

What's the Point?

Prayer; Quiet Time

Main Point: The time we personally spend with God defines us. If we skip spending time with Him, our lives lack true definition. The reasons for studying the Bible and praying are far too great to neglect.

Discussion Starter: Top 10 Reasons for Not Having a Quiet Time

Read these Top 10 Reasons in David Letterman style, starting from 10 and working your way down. Of course, feel free to substitute in some of your own "reasons."

10. What? I can't miss *The Office* right now! Did you see what Dwight just did?
9. I need to spend more time with my family...yeah, that's it...my family.
8. *Call of Duty: Black Ops*. Need I say more?
7. I'm too sleepy in the morning to read my Bible. And at night, too.
6. I've got so much to do around the house: clean my room, walk the dog, scoop the poop, change the litter box, pick on my little brother....
5. I can't even pronounce half the people's names in the Bible!
4. I'm allergic to genuine cowhide leather.
3. If you have one quiet time, God's going to expect another.
2. Don't know if I should fold my hands this way, or that way, when I pray.
1. Sorry. I've got a rousing game of Full Contact Croquet to get to.

Transitional Statement:

Some of those excuses sound ridiculous, right? OK, all of them sound ridiculous. In fact, there isn't a good reason to skip a personal time with God each and every day. The benefits of life-defining moments with God simply cannot be ignored. Let's spend a few moments talking about how we can make sure we have a time with God every day.

Divide into Small Groups:

Let's go ahead and split up into our discussion groups, and then afterward we'll come back together for a final word.

Discussion Questions:

1. AROUND THE CIRCLE: As we begin, let's all take a moment to share our names and our favorite person to hang out with.

2. ASK A FEW: Were there some “excuses” missing from our list that you can think of?
3. ASK A FEW: When people talk about quiet times, they are usually referring to two things: prayer and Bible study. Of those two, which seems to be the most important? Why?
4. ASK A FEW: Which of these two seem to be the most difficult for you? Why?
5. ASK A FEW: Do you ever feel like not praying or studying the Bible at all? I mean, have you ever asked yourself, “What’s the point?” Why?

Read the following passage:

Psalm 119:9-16 (NIV)

How can a young person keep their way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Praise be to you, O LORD; teach me your decrees. With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth. I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches. I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

6. ASK SOMEONE: The psalmist asks himself a question: How can I keep my way pure. How does he answer himself?
7. ASK A FEW: What does it mean that he has “hidden God’s Word in his heart”?
8. ASK A FEW: Can we do that today? If not, why not? If so, how?
9. ASK A FEW: Why do you think this person is so passionate about God’s Word?

Read the following passage:

Matthew 6:5-13 (NIV)

“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on

babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

"This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

- 10.ASK SOMEONE: What are some things Jesus tells us NOT to do when we pray?
- 11.ASK A FEW: What are some other wrong ways/reasons to pray?
- 12.ASK A FEW: Does anything surprise you about the way Jesus tells us TO pray?
- 13.ASK A FEW: What are some creative ideas for keeping your quiet times fresh?
- 14.ASK A FEW: What are the biggest obstacles keeping you from praying and studying the Bible on a daily basis?
- 15.AROUND THE CIRCLE: How would your life be different if you prayed and studied, daily?

Wrap Up

I enjoyed our small group time tonight. I think we covered some really important elements of life: prayer and Bible study. Let me just remind you that Jesus spent time in synagogues reading and studying His Father's Word. He also spent lots and lots of time in prayer with Him. If Jesus needed that, so do we!

You know, the best reason I'd say to pray and study is simple: God wants to hear from us and be heard by us. In short, God – the Creator of the universe – wants to be alone with you! Pretty cool.

(Optional)

Listen, before we close tonight, I want to have a little fun. We've prepared a short skit to sort of illustrate how things can go wrong when we seek to pray to God. Take a look at this simple little sketch to see if any of these roadblocks are hindering your daily devotions with God.

Skit: The Wrong Kind of Prayer

Narrator: A couple of students were praying in their rooms the night before their very first time in youth group. Listen in to hear what they were praying about.

Guy: Dear God, I am so excited about youth group tomorrow. I just pray that You would draw me...into the presence...of a hot girl! I just know you're gonna bring me there and the light's gonna shine down from Heaven on that girl. Lord, I know you hear my prayer.

Girl: God, I just pray that at this new youth group, it will be *all girls* – no stupid boys. Just girls – but no mean girls.

Guy: God, I know that You've laid it on my heart to be a missionary...to the females in my youth group. You've given me all the love and compassion they need. I thank You for this call, Lord. It's not an easy call, but I'll go. Here I am, send me!

Girl: Oh, Lord, I pray that my hair won't frizz up during youth group...and that everyone will be nice to me...because I hate mean girls....especially mean church girls! And if there are any dumb boys there, and they get any ideas about talking to me, which of course they will, I just pray You'll strike them with muteness.

Guy: God, I just have this sense that tomorrow when I go to youth group, there will be some cute girl there who's ready for me to minister to her. Lead me, by Your spirit, to that girl. Your word says that when we need to talk Your spirit will give us the words to say. So I pray that You'd give me the best pick-up line from heaven! And I thank You that You've blessed me with such a pretty face and a muscular body. The combination of *myself and Your* spirit, no girl can resist. God, you *do* want me to have a Christian girlfriend, don't you? So, please point her out to me tonight!"

Girl: And, Lord, don't let anyone act dumb around me...especially boys looking for cute girls like me at youth group!

The End

OK, that was pretty silly, but I think it gets the point across. We need to be focused on God's desires during our time with Him. Let's use those moments with the Creator to let Him influence His creation: us!

If you need more help with this, just hang back a few more minutes when we break up for the evening. The adult leaders in this room know how important it is to have daily times set aside with God. We'd love to help you with this. Just come see us.

Close in Prayer

By Danette Matty; Skit by Danette Matty, Ryan and Liz Underwood

You Ain't the Boss of Me!

Lordship Christianity

Main Point: We cannot be true followers of Christ if we are not willing to let Him be the Lord of our lives.

Discussion Starter: Job Negotiations

This discussion starter employs a skit entitled "Yeah...That's Gonna be a Problem." You can do it live in front of your group, or you can record it beforehand and just show it as a video. *(The latter is usually easier to do – and better – because you can insert silly sound effects, and you don't have to worry about flubs; they're edited out in the production phase. But both formats will work.)*

Skit: Yeah...That's Gonna Be a Problem

(The setting is in a professional office. A desk and two chairs – one on either side – is really all you need to pull this off. One person, the Boss, is interviewing the second person, the Job Applicant. The gist is that the Boss is willing to hire the Job Applicant, but the Job Applicant is having one difficulty with the position after another.)

Boss: Let's see here, Mr. Jones. Everything about your resume looks in order. I like the amount of experience you have. You seem to have everything we're looking for in this new position. If you'd like the job, it's yours.

Job Applicant: Great! I'll take it!

Boss: Congratulations! Do you have any questions?

Job Applicant: Ummm...what time do I need to be in the office each day?

Boss: We like to have everyone in their offices by 8:00am.

Job Applicant: Yeeeeaaaahhhhh...that's gonna be a problem. You see, I usually sleep in until about 11:00am or so. I could probably be here by noon every day. 1:00pm at the latest.

Boss: (Slightly incredulous look on his face) Well...I'm not sure that's going to fit into our....

Job Applicant: (Interrupting) By the way, does my office come with a TV in it?

Boss: No. None of the offices have a TV in them.

Job Applicant: Yeeaaahhhhhh....that's gonna be a problem. There's no way I can miss Oprah in the afternoon! (*This is a lot funnier if the Job Applicant is a guy.*) Man, she's great! So insightful. She really grips my emotions in all the right places.

Boss: (*Dazed look on his face*) Well, instead of watching TV on the clock, the rest of our employees actually spend their time here...working. We can't afford to....

Job Applicant: Speaking of affording stuff. I really want a new car so I'm gonna need my first paycheck now.

Boss: (*Growing very impatient*) That's impossible! You haven't even started yet. There's no way we can pay you for work you haven't even done yet. I mean, that wouldn't....

Job Applicant: Yeaaaahhhhhh....that's gonna be a problem. You gotta be able to do something here. You're the boss. I mean, can't you pull some strings or something?

Boss: I'm afraid I can't pull any strings for you...

Job Applicant: Oohhh...and pulling strings reminds me that I don't want to pull a hamstring. I need to leave early on Tuesdays and Thursdays; I'm in a terrific yoga group. We just started the Downward Facing Dog position and it's amazing what it can do for your gluts. That cool?

Boss: Yeeeeaaaahhh...that's gonna be a problem. In the immortal words of Donald Trump: "You're Fired."

Job Applicant: So, I guess this is a bad time to ask for a raise, huh?

The End

Transition Statement:

How silly did that sound? A guy who wants a job telling his brand new boss all the stuff he wants, needs, and won't do. Pretty crazy sounding in that context. But, if we're willing to tell the truth, we do the exact same thing with Jesus all the time. We tell Him there are things we want, and we tell Him there are things we won't do. That's even more ridiculous! This problem comes from the fact that we don't see Jesus as our Lord. So, let's spend the next few moments talking about that to see if we can change it.

Divide into Small Groups:

Let's go ahead and split up into our discussion groups, and then afterward we'll come back together for a final word.

Discussion Questions:

1. AROUND THE CIRCLE: As we get started, let's all take a second to share our names and whether or not you've ever said, "You're not the boss of me!" to anybody.
2. ASK A FEW: Do you think the boss from the skit reacted too harshly in firing the job applicant? Why or why not?
3. ASK A FEW: If you were the boss in that skit, would you have fired the job applicant as well? Why or why not?
4. ASK A FEW: Do you see Christians approaching Jesus the way the job applicant approached the boss? If so, in what ways?

5. ASK A FEW: Why do people approach Jesus like that? (Leaders – *Because some people only see Jesus as Savior instead of Savior AND Lord.*)

Read the following passage:

Luke 2:11 (NIV)

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

6. ASK SOMEONE: How was Jesus introduced to mankind...even at His birth? (Leaders – *Jesus was introduced as Savior and as Lord. That's huge!*)
7. ASK A FEW: What does it mean to treat Jesus as Savior AND Lord, instead of just treating Jesus as Savior?

Read the following passage:

1 Peter 1:13-21 (NIV)

Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

8. ASK SOMEONE: What are several of the commands given in this passage? (Leaders – *prepare your minds, be self-controlled, hope in Jesus' revelation, do not conform to evil desires, be holy, and live life as a stranger on earth.*)

9. ASK SOMEONE: According to verse 16, what kind of lives are we to lead, and what's that mean?
10. ASK SOMEONE: According to this passage, what did the Father use to redeem our lives?
11. ASK A FEW: What does it mean for Jesus to be our Savior, and what does it mean for Him to be our Lord?
12. ASK A FEW: Based on this passage, do you think Jesus has the right to be Savior and Lord? Why or why not?
13. ASK A FEW: What happens if we do not let Jesus be our Savior and our Lord?
14. AROUND THE CIRCLE: If you can, I'd like for each of you to share one area of your life that Jesus isn't Lord over.
15. AROUND THE CIRCLE: Now, let's each share one thing we're going to do differently this week to show Jesus He IS the Lord over that area of our lives.

Wrap Up:

When we were growing up – especially if we had an older brother or sister – at some point, they would tell us what to do or how to act, and we'd respond with that ancient phrase, "You ain't the boss of me!" Let's face it: we don't like to be told what to do...by anybody!

Sometimes, we bring that attitude into our relationship with Jesus. Now, granted, we'd never look at Jesus and say, "You ain't the Boss of me!" but we convey that message every time we disobey Him, every time we choose to be unholy, every time we forget that it was by His blood that we were redeemed.

Jesus is our Savior. That's how we have eternal life. There is no other source of eternal life on Earth. Period.

But Jesus is also our Lord. That means, He is our Boss. He is our Leader. He must be in control. And when we choose to disobey or disrespect our Lord, there will be consequences. You were living your life your way...and that's why you needed a Savior in the first place! Why would Jesus save you and then turn you back over to yourself? That's silly. He knows you need new leadership in your life and He's the only One who can give it.

As we wrapped up tonight, you were asked two very important questions: what's an

area of your life where Jesus isn't Lord?, and what are you going to do about it this week?

If you need help talking about the answers to those two questions, we're here to help. Just grab one of our adult leaders before you leave.

Close in Prayer

Idea by Danette Matty

On Fire Like a Grill

Fellowship

Main Point: As followers of Jesus, we need to have fellowship with other Christians to help us stay encouraged, challenged, and faithful.

Discussion Starter: Staying on Fire

(This discussion starter can actually be used in a number of ways. You can just "describe" this to the students...or you can actually do it in front of them. This resource will be written as though you're opting to actually do this in front of them. You probably can't do this inside, given most building's indoor sprinkling systems (and common sense). If you opt to "do" this instead of just "describe" it, you'll need a grill, charcoal briquettes, lighter fluid, matches, and a pair of tongs. And make sure to rehearse these steps and statements so you can clearly communicate the point.)

Standing beside a grill, ask your students: "Do you guys ever grill out? One of my favorite things to do is grill out with the family, cooking up burgers, chicken, steaks, ribs...basically any and every animal known to man. I like standing next to the flame feeling its heat, listening to the crackling of the fire, and smelling the meat begin to sizzle. Ahhhhhh....life is good when I'm grilling!

"And you know what? The last time we were grilling out as a family, I looked into my grill at the fire...and thought of you guys. Let me explain.

"We were grilling burgers and dogs and I had everything ready to go. I had my grill, the charcoal, the lighter fluid, some matches, and lots of raw meat! I began by

pouring several handfuls of charcoal briquettes into the bottom of my grill. (As you say this, do it in front of them.)

"The next thing I did was to make sure those briquettes were all stacked up nice and tight together. It's amazing how important that step is. I generally just make a pyramid-looking shape.

"The next thing I do is douse all those charcoal briquettes in a bath of lighter fluid. (Do this in front of them, as well.) Guys, I really like a big, hot, scorching flame, so I use a LOT of lighter fluid. In fact, I generally soak the briquettes at least twice with lighter fluid. This is tough because it requires patience. I soak them once, and then have to wait about a minute or so, and then I soak them again. But the wait is worth it! Because once I strike the match, oh baby! We got fire! (If possible, take the extra minute or so to soak the briquettes twice. Just kill time by talking about how good the food is gonna taste, or something.)

"And now it's time for the most thrilling part: lighting the fire. Because I've used a lot of lighter fluid, I stand back far enough to avoid killing myself during the moment of combustion. Are you ready? (Now strike a match and light the briquettes on fire.)

"Ahhhh....fire! There's nothing like the smell of charcoal getting hot. I can almost taste the meat now! Mmmm...I'm so happy right now! (Take about 30 seconds to let the flames get nice and hot.)

"Like I said earlier, the last time I was grilling, I thought of you guys, and THIS was the point when I did. See, I had this really big flame going just like this one; all the briquettes were on fire. Everything was going great. The briquettes were all stacked up, the fire was making a lot of smoke. The grill was getting hot, and the meat was about to go on when I looked at the fire and had this thought: the charcoal briquettes are burning nicely...but only because they stay together. Every single briquette was on fire, and burning hot, but only because they were together.

"But just to test my theory, I grabbed my tongs and carefully lifted one of the flaming briquettes out of the fire. (Do the same thing in front of them now.) I safely set it on the table and watched something happen to that briquette. Let's see if the same thing happens to this one.

(After you place the flaming briquette on the table, the fire should extinguish fairly quickly. After it does, drive home the main point of this demonstration.)

“Did you see that? Did you see what happened? The briquette that I pulled out of the flames – that WAS on fire – soon died out. It lost its flame. Do you know why? Because it was separated from the rest of the briquettes. And you know, if I were to do this again and again, the exact same thing would happen every time. The briquette that’s lifted out of the flame and set aside by itself will always go out. It will always lose its fire.

Transition Statement:

And so will you! As a Christian, if you live your life closely to other Christians, your flame burns long and bright. But if you separate yourself from godly friends and relatives, you will eventually lose your flame. That’s because we need each other! Interestingly enough, even though this briquette has lost its flame, hope isn’t lost. Wanna know why? Because if I toss this briquette back into the pile of other briquettes, within moments, it’s back on fire again! The same is true for you. If you put yourself back into godly relationships with your Christian friends, you regain your fire.

Divide into Small Groups:

Let’s go ahead and split up into our discussion groups, and then afterward we’ll come back together for a final word.

Discussion Questions:

- AROUND THE CIRCLE: As we begin, let’s take a second to share our names and our favorite food cooked on the grill.
- ASK A FEW: Did you know what was going to happen to the briquette when it was taken out of the fire?
- ASK A FEW: Is it easier to live a godly life in close relationship to other Christians, apart from other Christians, or it doesn’t matter?
- ASK A FEW: Was there ever a time in your own life when you felt like you were “on-fire” but then lost your flame so to speak? (Leaders – *If it’s appropriate and students are willing, you might have a couple of them share their experience.*)
- ASK A FEW: What were your relationships with godly people like during that time? Were you close to others, or had you drifted apart?

- ASK A FEW: Why do you think it is so difficult for Christians to try to be “on-fire” by themselves?

Read the following passage:

Psalm 133 (NIV)

How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity! It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron’s beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the LORD bestows His blessing, even life forevermore.

- ASK SOMEONE: How does the Bible describe Christians living in unity?
- ASK SOMEONE: What does God do for those who live together in unity?
- ASK A FEW: What do some of those “blessings” look like in our lives?

Read the following passage:

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NIV)

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

- ASK SOMEONE: What are some of the benefits of working together in life?
- ASK SOMEONE: What are some of the risks of walking through life alone?
- ASK A FEW: After reading these passages, what do you think one of your roles in our youth ministry should be?
- ASK A FEW: How will doing this keep the others in our ministry on fire?
- AROUND THE CIRCLE: Without naming names, is there someone in your life that has taken himself or herself “out of the fire” that you think needs to be rejoined to the group? If so, what will you do about that this week?
- **WRAP UP:**

Tonight we saw the importance of staying together. Like those briquettes, if we separate ourselves from one another, we lose our flame. That simple exercise we did earlier paints a powerful message in our hearts: we need each other as we live our lives for Jesus.

The cool thing is, when everybody is doing their part, the flame in our lives and in our ministry burns hotter and brighter than at any other time! That's a good enough reason right there for us to stick together and live our lives the way the two Bible passages said to.

But, some of us in here right now are thinking about other people we love who have drifted apart from us and our ministry. That saddens our heart. But let me remind you, just like that briquette that was separated from the rest, when we are placed back in the group, we rekindle our flame.

Let's take a few moments and pray for those students that God has placed on our hearts. (Give students ample time to do this.)

Finally, I'd just ask you to put some feet on those prayers. Send that person a text, give them a call, poke them on Facebook, or even better, write them a letter THIS WEEK and let them know you miss them and that you truly love them. I know for a fact that'll make a big difference in their lives.

Close in Prayer

Written by KJ Stephens

Idea Starter...

Taco Bell Tuesday

Buy 150 burritos and 75 cups for soda at the Taco Bell near your high school. Pick up some 2-liter sodas, and during the students' lunch break, hand out FREE burritos and drinks. Give out flyers about your weekly program and some of your upcoming activities.

Cory Gant, Youth Minister, Santa Clara Church of Christ, Eugene, OR